

record is exceptional. President of the National Honor Society, Aliceson has also earned the Jackson Citizen Patriot Class Act Award, the Albion College Sleight Leadership Award, and was listed in "Who's Who Among American High School Students." As captain of the Quiz Bowl Team, a science olympiad participant, she has excelled academically. Aliceson has also been involved with student government and a member of SADD and other community organizations.

In special tribute, therefore, I am proud to join with her many admirers in extending my highest praise and congratulations to Aliceson Robinson for her selection as a winner of a LeGrand Smith Scholarship. This honor is also a testament to the parents, teachers, and others whose personal interest, strong support, and active participation contributed to her success. To this remarkable young woman, I extend my most heartfelt good wishes for all her future endeavors.

HONORING THE FAIRGROUNDS
VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT

HON. BART GORDON

OF TENNESSEE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 14, 1996

Mr. GORDON. Mr. Speaker, I am taking this opportunity to applaud the invaluable services provided by the Fairgrounds Volunteer Fire Department. These brave, civic-minded people give freely of their time so that we may all feel safer at night.

Few realize the depth of training and hard work that goes into being a volunteer firefighter. To quote one of my local volunteers, "These fireman must have an overwhelming desire to do for others while expecting nothing in return."

Preparation includes twice-monthly training programs in which they have live drills, study the latest videos featuring the latest in firefighting tactics, as well as attend seminars where they can obtain the knowledge they need to save lives. Within a year of becoming a volunteer firefighter, most attend the Tennessee fire training school in Murfreesboro where they undergo further, intensified training.

When the residents of my district go to bed at night, they know that should disaster strike and their home catch fire, well-trained and qualified volunteer fire departments are ready and willing to give so graciously and generously of themselves. This peace of mind should not be taken for granted.

By selflessly giving of themselves, they ensure a safer future for us all. We owe these volunteer fire departments a debt of gratitude for their service and sacrifice.

U.S. HOUSING ACT OF 1996

SPEECH OF

HON. LOUIS STOKES

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 8, 1996

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union had under consideration the bill (H.R. 2406) to repeal

the United States Housing Act of 1937, deregulate the public housing program and the program for rental housing assistance for low-income families, and increase community control over such programs, and for other purposes.

Mr. STOKES. Mr. Chairman, I rise in strong opposition to H.R. 2406, the United States Housing Act of 1996. Let me say at the outset that, while I appreciate the efforts of my colleagues on the other side of the aisle to improve the Federal housing stock in this Nation, these reforms come at the expense of the most vulnerable in our society—the poor, elderly, and disabled.

The most revealing element of this measure can be found in the opening section entitled "Declaration of Policy to Renew American Neighborhoods". This policy statement includes a declaration that "the Federal Government cannot through its direct action or involvement provide for the housing of every American citizen, or even a majority of its citizens, but it is the responsibility of the Government to promote and protect the independent and collective actions of private citizens to develop housing and strengthen their own neighborhoods".

This declaration reverses a longstanding policy of nearly 60 years which expresses a goal of our Nation that all citizens have decent and affordable housing. What follows in H.R. 2406 substantiates this reversal from a moral obligation the United States as a world leader once advocated on behalf of its citizens.

For example, take the provision that retreats on the Brooke amendment which protects people from paying excessive and disproportionate amounts of their income on housing. The bill before us would only apply the Brooke amendment to current residents of public housing with incomes below 30 percent of median income, and for current elderly and disabled residents. No future elderly or disabled recipients would get the protection of the Brooke amendment if they are under 30 percent of median income.

This bill would also diminish the percentage of housing units available to the very lowest income families; causing irreparable harm to those in need. Current law provides that 85 percent of public housing units be provided to families with incomes at or below 30 percent of median income. H.R. 2406 requires only 25 percent of these units be set aside for these families. While a local housing authority can provide more units to the very poor, they will be losing Federal assistance—and will likely be desperate to rent to higher income families in order to make up the deficit from the dwindling Federal revenues. This situation comes at the expense of the very poor.

Mr. Chairman, this measure takes housing reform to new heights by including a provision that creates tenant self sufficiency contracts. We expect a person—who is often uneducated, unskilled and without work—to negotiate a contract with a housing authority that states how long they think they will need this assistance. What is so damaging about this contract is that when it ends, the resident graduates or, simply put, loses assistance.

Like many other Members of Congress, I recognize the need to examine and reassess our public and section 8 housing programs because of the many changes that have occurred since these programs were first established. During the 103d Congress, similar re-

forms as those proposed in H.R. 2406 were passed by the House in a bipartisan vote. H.R. 2406 includes most of these reforms. Unfortunately, as we have seen with most of the legislation promulgated by our colleagues on the majority side of the House, this bill goes too far and will cause irreparable harm to thousands of the poorest, the most vulnerable, the most needy of our citizens.

Mr. Chairman, not every community in this Nation can boast the leadership of a top-notch and experienced Public Housing Authority director as we do in Cleveland. If we had the absolute knowledge that this would be the case, few of us would argue against much of what is in this bill. But that is not the situation. As proposed in this bill, the future of thousands of Americans would be left to local authorities without Federal regulation. Reasonable reform is one thing; indifference to the plight of the poor is another. I urge my colleagues to vote no "on" H.R. 2406.

HONORING THE FAIRVIEW
VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT

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OF TENNESSEE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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SPEECH OF

HON. JACK REED

OF RHODE ISLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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